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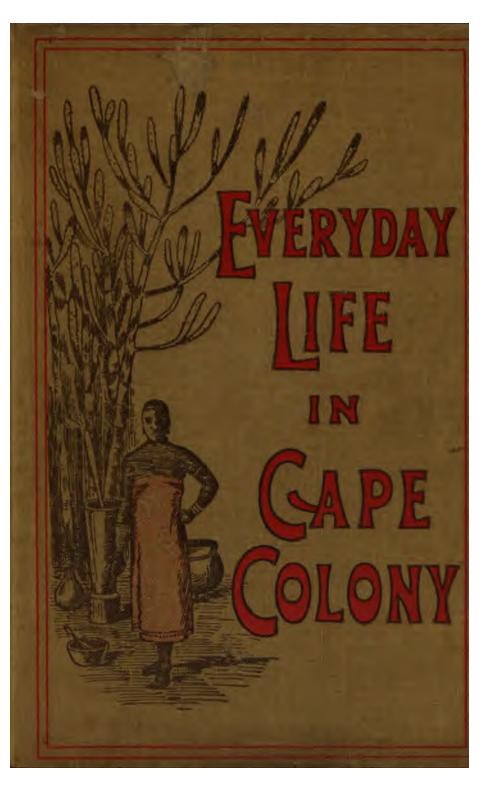
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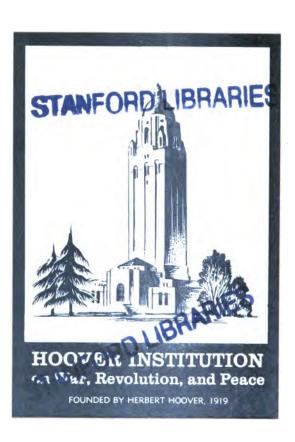
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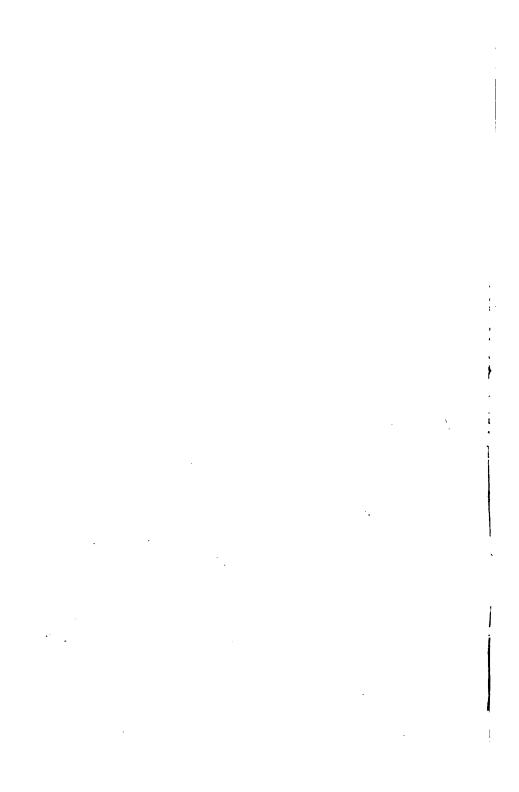


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EVERYDAY LIFE IN CAPE COLONY







"IN THE BUSH "-THE ROADSIDE.

Frontispiece.

Cadbury, Richard. EVERYDAY LIFE IN CAPE COLONY

IN TIME OF PEACE

By X. C.

WITH THREE ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1902

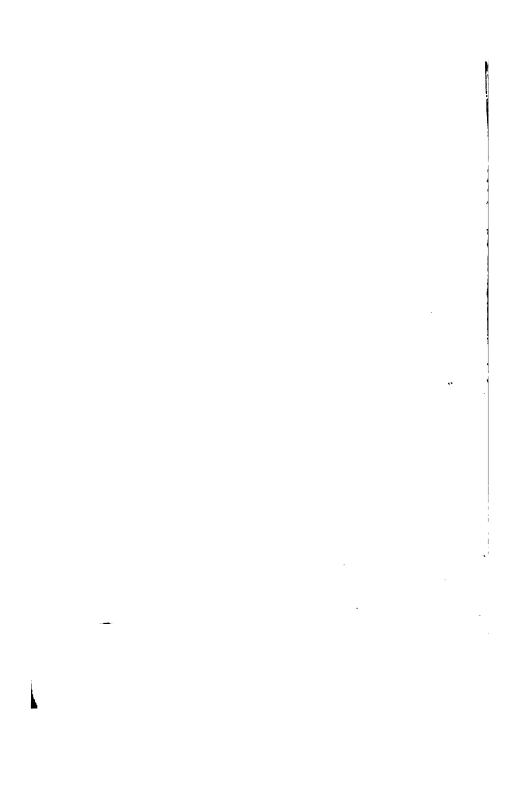
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PREFACE .

THESE pages contain nothing political, being merely a sketch of personal experiences and impressions. The greater portion is a sketch of what the writer considers as one of the most attractive parts of Cape Colony, which, if it had not been badly handicapped, would have become, and no doubt will in time become, a very popular centre.

The Sketch will no doubt be at variance with other persons' experience in the Colony, but that will be because no two places in the country have the same advantages, or are governed exactly by the same circumstances.

X. C.

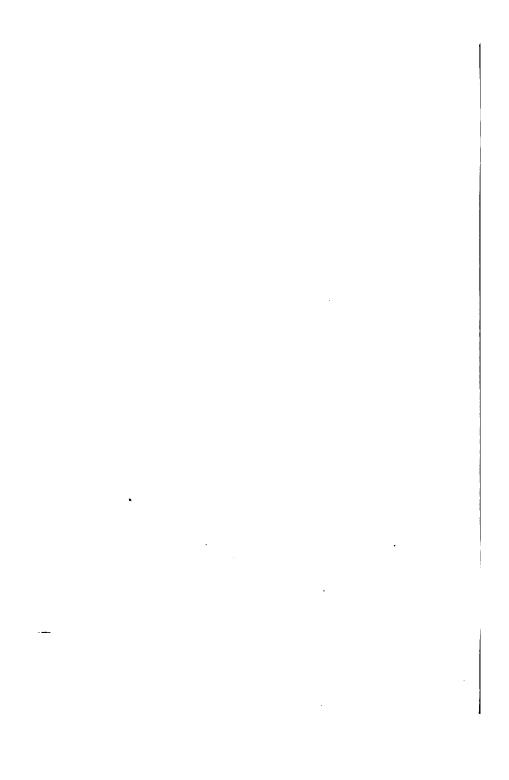


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EVERYDAY LIFE IN CAPE COLONY

CHAPTER I

CAPE TOWN, AND OTHER MATTERS.

Africa! The land I had long wished to see. The land of Negroes, Boers, and Mystery! At last my opportunity came to go there, and just after Dr Jameson's raid I arrived in Cape Town.

We had been beating about off Table Bay most of the night, and it was some time after sunrise before Table Mountain was sighted above the mist. Every one crowded to the side of the boat to see what they could, on their first acquaintance with the new country, wondering what it had in store for them.

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No one can watch a crowd of emigrants fresh from England, just entering their destined port, without trying to picture them, say five or ten years hence. What a history might be written by one shipload in that time!

Of my fellow ship's-passengers, some returned very soon to England, disgusted and disappointed with the outlook in towns and country; others found it exceedingly difficult to get work; some have done well; many others had friends or introductions to settlers in the colony; while still others came apparently for the mere fun of the thing.

On nearing the landing-stage, we saw what might have been placed there as a stage-piece for our special benefit. There were mountains of coal and an army of natives. It was hard to tell the coal from the natives, who sat amongst it, waiting to load it into the ship's bunkers. There were rows of small cabs and piles of merchandise, amongst which wandered a crowd of Cape Town's very miscellaneous population, representing nearly every degree of white, yellow, brown, and black humanity.

The docks all round us were filled with shipping from many and widely scattered ports.

While still in the Bay, our ship was boarded by a shouting and struggling crowd of agents and hotel porters, each describing himself as prompt and in all ways the most desirable. I engaged an agent as a necessary evil to look after my luggage, and then with a friend went in search of an hotel.

Walking through the town, we realise that we are indeed in a new country. The sober clothing of England has given way to light felt hats, light garments, and bright colours. Instead of white labourers, there are crowds of black workmen. Even many of the cabmen and drivers are coloured. The smart and sleek horses we have been used to have given place to teams of mules or oxen, or thin and unhappy-looking horses, with every rib showing through their skins. The main streets are well made and have good footpaths, but in nearly all the side streets the paths are obstructed by verandahs, which turn pedestrians into the road, a by no means enviable experience in wet weather, when the streets are often some inches deep in mud. Nearly every other house in Cape Town has a single or double verandah. These give the streets a very foreign appearance.

We had not expected to find hotel accommodation in Cape Colony equal to that of England, but our first experience of South African hotels was even worse than we had anticipated. We had been recommended to a certain hotel as a good one, and the outside did promise a good deal more comfort than we got within. I suppose the proprietor saw that we were "green," and therefore gave us the worst room.

The paper was falling from the walls in sheets, and the ceiling was roughly planked and whitewashed. Our bedroom door opened upon a balcony which ran round a yard containing the kitchen and other offices. It is only fair to add that later experience has proved that Cape Town can furnish as good hotel accommodation as any place.

To any single young man going to Cape Town for the first time, I can highly recommend the Young Men's Christian Association, which makes its boarding-house a special feature of its work. One of the members will usually be found on the look-out for incoming steamers.

Except in the towns, the hotels of Cape Colony are nearly always built on one level, the bedrooms leading into a garden, a verandah, or a yard. In nearly every hotel black servants are employed. They are not always as trim as they might be, but perhaps this is not the fault of the proprietors. I myself should not like to promise to keep any single native clean and tidy for a whole day! Oftener than not, there are white waiters, but in many places one is waited on by natives, sometimes without shoes or stockings, and not too much clothing. They make smart attendants and are noiseless. A native servant brings coffee into your bedroom at half-past six in the morning, when you want to be left alone, and wish those who bring it anywhere else. You get coffee for breakfast, coffee after lunch, coffee after dinner, coffee when out calling, coffee at eleven, and coffee at four. They call it coffee, but it is often difficult to guess what it is made of. Coffee is indeed an institution in Cape Colony.

What South Africa would do without tinned foods it would be hard to say. When fresh foods are scarce, we almost live on tinned soups, fish, meats, vegetables, and fruits. I once sat down to dinner in a country hotel, at which tinned herrings were served up in the bill of fare under three different names, and formed a large portion of it. On the other hand, venison is by no means scarce, though it is often kept so long in the form of biltong, that to the taste it is often more fit to be buried than eaten.

In Cape Town penguin eggs are considered a delicacy. They are eaten with pepper, salt, butter, and other condiments, according to taste—or is it to drown the original flavour? The taste of one penguin egg has outlasted five years, and I don't think the dose will need repeating, for a fouler and more fishy egg I have never eaten. The convicts, I am told, are fed on penguin eggs; I suppose it is on the principle of Charles Dickens' "brimstone and treacle."

Fruit can nearly always be procured in every part of the Colony. Besides the usual bananas, pine-apples, oranges, and naartjes, there are nearly sure to be on every hotel table either loquats, guavas, ripe figs, or water-melons, all of which are delicious fruits, and well suited to the country, being juicy and cooling.

For those on pleasure bent, Cape Town has not many attractions. If there were only a comfortably seated pier running out from the foot of Adderley Street well into the waters of the Bay, with a sea wall to right and left along the Bay front, visitors and the inhabitants of Cape Town could enjoy the Bay and the surrounding scenery of mountain, town, and shipping; but at present there is only an old wooden jetty, which rocks with almost every ripple, and which people make use of at their own risk. It seems to me a pity that Cape Town, shut in as it is with mountains, should be content to remain so, and not make use of the shores of its grand Bay as a shaded esplanade, where its people might fill their lungs with fresh sea air at any time, without taking a journey to Sea Point for the purpose.

One of the most interesting centres in Cape Town is the railway station, which we might call the heart of South Africa, from which the fresh blood flows to all parts of the country. Any of the daily corridor trains leaving for or arriving from the interior furnishes food for reflection and interest. There is almost sure to be one or other of Africa's financial kings on board, and young fellows, full of hope, about to seek their fortunes, dreaming of gold and dressed in wonderful diamonds. colonial costumes, "made in England," carrying all their worldly possessions with them: or soldiers and volunteers, either going to or returning from one or other of the innumerable tribal squabbles in the interior. What a pity it is that some peaceable way cannot be found to deal with these matters!

The slopes of the Lion's Head, Table Mountain, and Devil's Peak, are pretty, and provide good climbing. From some points, such as the reservoir, fine views are obtained across the city and Bay, to the mountains beyond, which are sometimes white with snow. The lower slopes of the mountains round the city

are extensively covered with pines and thick "bush," the beautiful silver tree growing freely on the slopes of Lion's Head, also proteas, or mountain roses, in many places, while, after rains, a profusion of wild flowers will be found everywhere.

One of Cape Town's most popular resorts is Sea Point; but to me the sun-baked rocks and sand dunes along the coast of South Africa are too desolate and bleak to be really attractive or interesting. The view looking down from the Lion's Head towards Sea Point and the indented coast-line beyond, shut in by the rugged cliffs of the Twelve Apostles, makes a beautiful and impressive picture.

Next to Table Mountain, Capetonians seem to pride themselves on the beauty of the suburbs and townships lying between Cape Town and Wynberg. These suburbs are well laid out, and the roads are shaded with large trees, the householders seeming to vie with each other in adding to the general effect, by laying their gardens out to the best advantage. Not least among them was the late Mr Cecil J. Rhodes, who generously threw his large

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gardens and plantations open to the public. The whole district is saved from monotony by the mountain slopes, along which, part of the suburbs are built. About August the ground in many places is covered with arum lilies. This is certainly one of the sights worth seeing. Arum lilies are so common in some parts of Cape Colony that the roots are used for fattening pigs; hence the name of "pig lilies," often given to them in the Colony.

CHAPTER II

ROUGHING IT

I HAD bought several erven of land in Alale, consisting of dense bush, mostly very thorny mimosa. Part of the land lay on the banks of a splendid lagoon of the Ban river.

A friend and myself decided to settle down on this new land and cultivate it. So, having built a tent, we moved with it and our belongings to Alale.

The bush was so thick that three mimosas had to be cut down before we could pitch our tent. It was a very hot day, and not being used to the work, we were not at all sorry when our first day was over. We awoke next morning to find the canvas heavy with the night's dew, and three snakes under our beds: one was a beautiful garter-snake, the others

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harmless (?) ground-snakes. During the following days we killed nine more in the same place.

There is something very exhilarating in tent life, with only a canvas for privacy, through which comes both fresh air and light, and it must be admitted rain, too, sometimes. We did all our own household work, and usually enjoyed it. Washing and cooking were conducted (often under difficulties) out of doors. When the sun was very hot our soap would melt, and more than three inches of candle would not stand up straight. In rainy weather we had cold fare, for we could not light our fire. But in spite of all drawbacks we throve wonderfully, with unlimited fresh air and exercise.

Our first care was to grub up the bush and throw the thorny branches into fences as a protection for the land; our next to dig and plant.

At first we had to contend with almost innumerable enemies. These ranged from natives—who took little care to conceal their depredations—to the wasps who laid their eggs in our fruits, the maggots of which totally

destroyed a great deal of our produce. In fact, our crops were a complete failure for the first year or two. The dry-bush fence that we had thrown up attracted thousands of field mice. These are larger than English mice, and are striped down the back with yellowish lines. They eat nearly everything—cloth, canvas, grain or potatoes—and soon caused us a great deal of trouble.

African cows have always given us trouble. They are great connoisseurs, but during long droughts are not able to satisfy their appetites with green forage, at such times eating dry sticks or herbage and even paper. When they see a dainty morsel, it needs a very strong fence to keep them from it. My garden was always green and well watered, and the cows used to look over the fence with longing eyes, until they learned one day how to open the gate with their horns. After that they would come in the early mornings before we were up, and help themselves to the best cauliflowers and cabbages.

One of our greatest pests was the maisont. This animal is about the size of a small cat, and has a bushy tail; the skin is prettily striped with yellow, or white and dark brown. The maisonts are difficult to kill, being very shy and tough. They have another protection against attack in a liquid which they squirt over their own skins or over their pursuers. This liquid has an exceedingly foul smell, which clings to everything it touches for months; even dogs dislike it so much that they often refuse to attack a maisont. These little animals will turn up a whole patch of newly-planted seedlings, in search of certain fat grubs, which were very plentiful in the garden at first.

We include otters amongst our enemies. I used to mistake them for natives until I learnt better, as they whistle to each other so much like human beings. The damage they did was of a playful kind. They seemed to delight in turning somersaults over the orange-trees, at least that is what it often looked like. One of my orange-trees was nearly ruined in this way; most of the branches were broken, and what was left was smeared with mud up to the top.

In those earlier days the native dogs would sometimes drive stray ostriches over our primitive fences, when there would follow an exciting chase up and down the garden, over beds, or whatever came in the way. Our small dog, a sort of bull terrier, took a huge delight in these chases. He was too small for the ostriches to kick, and would make them quite furious. One of these infuriated birds ran at me one day, and I only just managed to keep it off with a thorny branch. Ostriches are senseless birds, and there are stories told of their stupidity. We had to carry one bird out of our garden, for it had settled itself down under a bush and would not be persuaded to go in any other way.

While on the subject of ostriches, I must relate an incident which occurred just outside this township. The youth of Cape Colony are much like the youth of every other country in the world, in that they delight in going to places where they know they are especially not wanted. We had a small youth there, who was no exception to the rule. Now, when ostriches are breeding, it

is highly advisable to leave them alone, for at such times they are very jealous of intrusion, and farmers for that reason usually put them in separate "camps." The abovementioned youth knew this perfectly well, and forthwith began to stroll about "camp," where a happy pair of ostriches were sitting, that is, the one was sitting while the other, as usual, was doing "sentry-go" in front of the nest. When the sentry ostrich saw the youth (whom we will call Tom) strolling up, he, like a senseless ostrich, took offence at the intrusion and gave chase. Now Tom knew that when an ostrich meant business. a rapid retreat was the best resource, so he promptly made for cover; but, unfortunately, there was no sufficient cover for him within reach, so he made for an isolated mimosa Then began an exciting chase. went round and round the mimosa bush, and the ostrich after him. But the ostrich has long legs, which are a disadvantage in a chase round so small a circle, and presently he slipped and fell. This was Tom's opportunity, and in a great fright he jumped into the

middle of the mimosa bush. The ostrich was even more frightened by its fall, and regaining its legs, ran away; upon which Tom jumped out of the mimosa bush and ran his hardest in the opposite direction. This youth will not be likely to interfere with broody ostriches again.

But to return to our garden. At first the ground seemed to be sown with large and small bulbs. We turned some up with nearly every spadeful of earth. Many bulbs were worthy of a place in any garden, others were not beautiful. Most numerous amongst them was the tulp, a bulb bearing a flower of a beautiful French blue in colour and iris-shaped. Cattle living in districts where tulp grows refuse to eat it, but cattle coming from another district, where there is no tulp, cannot distinguish it from the herbage round, and eating it causes death to them. Around Alale the lower "bush" is, at the proper season of the year, quite blue with it.

Sometimes the wild bush was very beautiful, specially when there was a green coating of grass. I think that the early morning,

after a heavy night's mist, was the best time to enjoy it. Then the slanting rays of the sun threw long shadows over the bright green of the grass, out of which stood the tulp, with its lovely blue petals, and many other African gems. Every leaf of the "bush" and each blade of grass seemed to be laden with crystal dew-drops, which the birds, as they moved twittering amongst the bushes, shook off like showers of jewels. At such times the air was so clear and fresh that it quite compensated for the heat of the day later on.

On the hottest days of summer large and small swarms of bees passed over us, many of them making hives of the hollow tree-trunks along the river banks. Our white tent seemed to have a special attraction for them, and we nearly always found some flying round it. The people in the district raided the hives for the sake of the honey, regardless of swollen faces and hands, caused by the stings of the bees whose honey they had rifled. Once a neighbour disturbed a very large hive, carelessly breaking the honey-

combs; the result was that the bees stung every member of his family, as well as many other people living in the neighbourhood.

As we were able to put up better fences, and get the ground into better condition, our enemies decreased. But there will always be the wasps to lay their eggs in the fruit, the drought, the hot winds, the locusts, and many other pests left to trouble dwellers.

CHAPTER III

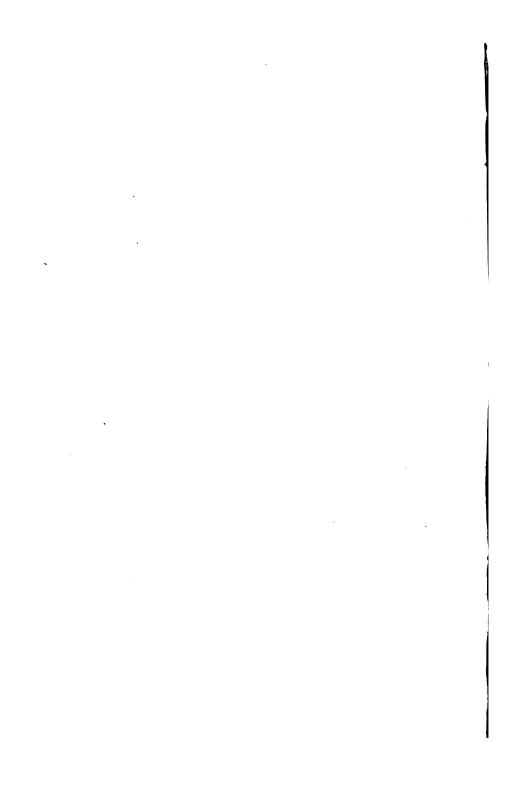
OUR AFRICAN GARDEN

When I want to fully appreciate our garden, I compare it with what it was a few years ago. Then the ground was covered with bush, which had not been disturbed since it had been dry land, for undoubtedly where Alale now stands, there was once a lake, which in some bygone age was emptied by the rocky barriers giving way in the poort, the traces of which barriers can still be plainly seen.

Then, no road led to our grounds, and we had to wind this way and that amongst the mimosa bushes, passing round wattle-and-daub huts, thatched with rushes, naked pickaninnies crawling about in front of the door, amongst chickens and dogs: possibly, near by, a woman would be sitting over a wood fire in the open, or pounding mealies in a hollow tree-trunk

PRICKLY PEAR.

To face page 32.



with a club. On the woman's head might be a turban, in her mouth a long-bowled pipe, a necklace of beads and teeth, armlets of brass, and strapped tightly on her back a small, shiny, black baby, supported by a shawl fastened in front.

Eventually we emerged into the main road to the township.

In those days we lived in a canvas tent, fearing with every gale that it would come down upon us, and during a thunderstorm we could see the shape of the lightning through the canvas. Then we cooked and washed out of doors, and had to carry water for garden and household purposes in buckets up the steep river bank by rough paths.

To-day we live in a snug house with a comfortable verandah. The native huts have disappeared; the bush is also gone. Instead of mimosa bushes, fruit and other trees are growing, and instead of the winding paths amongst the bush, which now I sometimes miss, there are trim paths and a road. We no longer dip our water out of the river and laboriously carry it up the river bank, but a

windmill brings it up for us, and we dip it out of stone tanks, or lead it where we will in pipes.

The road which cuts our ground into two parts is a grassy one, fenced in with wire and cleared of stumps. Along the far side are healthy young trees, grouvillia, eucalyptus, and beefwood, which give promise of shade in years to come.

We are fond of wild bits of bush and wood, and, where possible, have left patches of them along the river banks: and are quite proud of the variety of native trees, bush, and creepers that we possess, but of which we know hardly any of the names.

Some of the wild plants in our garden are valued by the Dutch and natives for medicinal purposes. The castor-oil plant is perhaps one of the most highly valued, natives often asking for a few leaves for headache and other ailments. Another is the cancer plant, a kind of acacia, bearing beautiful snap-dragon-shaped flowers of a bright red colour. The wild tobacco is also used for certain ailments, and another small bush, much resembling the Cape

gooseberry, but with smaller leaves and fruit of a brilliant red, is used as a certain specific for boils, the bruised leaves being applied as a poultice, and the berries being looked upon as a certain cure for distemper in dogs.

We have some good specimens of wild olive, which the natives use for making their knob-kerries, considering it the best wood for the purpose. They have a mode of hardening the wood by a careful process of burning.

The root of another bush is exceedingly hard, and has a fine, pretty grain. It is used by the natives to make their long-bowled pipes, which are fashioned with great care and are perfectly symmetrical.

One part of our river bank is thickly covered with full-grown trees, and over these grow masses of wild clematis, passion-flower, and another creeper which bears a strawberry-pink flower and crimson pods, a little larger than a gherkin, the leaves being something like ivy, but of a transparent green. There are numbers of smaller creepers in the shady recesses, some with yellow flowers like the laburnum, others with blue flowers, and some with sweet-scented

masses of yellow, each having some sweet scent or beauty of its own.

The river's edge is lined with reeds and rushes, the former often growing to ten or fifteen feet in height, and giving much trouble by their propensity to send out shoots in all directions, often smothering trees and vegetables that had been planted near the river. The rushes are highly valued by the natives for thatching their huts and tying up bundles, owing to their toughness and durability, and for which purpose they bruise them between stones. Several willow-trees overhang the lagoon, their twigs of delicate green sweeping the surface of the water. The opposite bank of the river, some hundred yards away, is also covered with large trees, the whole making a very pretty picture.

As soon as part of the steep river bank had been cleared of bush and weeds, we had it cut into terraces and planted with Bahia oranges and naartjes, which, with the shelter of the banks and the moisture of the river, do very well, and have this year yielded their first rich crop of golden balls.

I like as far as possible to do the garden work myself. The flowers and trees seem to respond to the care given them, and to droop and run to seed when left to themselves and the gardener. But gardeners are a necessity, and, after all, I am not sure that I do not get as much pleasure out of them as I do out of the flowers and trees. One of my gardeners, "Julius Cæsar" by name, was a Basuto. He nearly always smiled a most pleasant smile, and was wonderfully good-tempered, except on rare occasions when the childishness of the true savage would break out for a day or two. When planting seedlings or making trenches, the rows would be about as straight as a dog's tracks. He never did master the meaning of the words straight and parallel. But with all his faults he was a good boy (all native labourers are "boys" in Cape Colony), hardworking, honest, and quite willing to do his best, though often with comical results. Other boys that I had were of no pure native race, but were very satisfactory, and gave no trouble, taking an intelligent interest in their occupation. When natives get settled down and interested in any work, they become thoroughly attached to it, and if anything happens to their work feel it keenly. I heard of one native shedding tears when a horse he had been tending for some time was sold. My boys were always anxious that their work should have the best possible results.

On the higher ground above the banks of the river, we planted, with other fruittrees, peaches, apricots, nectarines, and apples, all of which have given good results for little Last year our two-year-old pomelabour. granate bushes were a perfect picture of bright green, crimson, and gold. Pomegranate bushes are always beautiful; the leaves are glossy and bright, the flowers rich, and the fruit very charming, especially when, just cracking with ripeness, they show the luscious fruit within. Our honey-pot grapes too, have been a success, yielding crops of almost too sweet fruit. Not so successful as these were our loquats, almonds, and plums. Though planted at the same time they have yielded no fruit.

For shade and ornamentation, and to screen our fruit-trees from the high winds which prevail here, we have planted beefwood, blackwood, pines, cypress, and other trees of the same kind. But the most successful and the prettiest of them all is the pepper-tree. Its finely intersected leaves are always graceful, and when it is covered with cream-coloured flower tassels or the light magenta berries that follow, the picture is perfect.

A good deal of fruit is destroyed by the birds, and no net seems to have a small enough mesh to keep the smaller birds off the ripe fruit.

I have watched a bird sitting on the blossom-laden branch of a nectarine tree knocking off showers of bloom by scraping its bill up and down the twigs. But our garden would be very dull without birds, and they may freely eat the fruit in exchange for the brightness they bring with their song and colour. And how beautiful some of them are:

—The sprues, with their glossy peacock-blue coats looking like flashes of coloured fire as they fly against the sunbeams, or the "honey-

suckers," * which are the most harmless and beautiful of them all. They are never still, flitting from twig to twig almost like butter-flies. The male bird's feathers are a fascinating blending of lustrous crimson, green, and blue, the females a modest grey. They flit from flower to flower, and hanging just below them, dip their curved bills amongst the petals, sucking the honey and possibly eating the small insects they find there.

The butcher birds are not so showy as the foregoing, but are much tamer. Their colours are black and white. One used to follow me about the garden, and when I was digging would keep quite close to the spade, looking out for grubs amongst the newly turned-up soil, and when it found one would fly with it to the barbed wire-fence, impale it on one of the barbs, and come back for another. One of our tamer birds is very much like a robin, with a red breast, but of slimmer build, and larger. This bird often comes to the house in the hope of picking up stray crumbs. I caught one of these birds twice within an hour in a spring

^{*} The Sun bird.

mouse-trap, which I had set outside with a piece of bread in it to catch field-mice. Swallows also visit us in the summer, building their mud nests in the angles of our verandah timbers. They leave us when the cold weather comes, to return again in the spring.

Cape canaries and bush pigeons are very numerous, as are wagtails, which are almost everywhere to be found where there is any water. The Dutch name for our smallest bird they pronounce "Knedike." It is about the size of our English wren, of a brown-grey in colour. It builds its nest of fine grass, wool and fluff, the inside of it being not so large as the inside of a tennis ball.

This short record of our birds hardly begins the list, but will serve to show that the bush around us is by no means without life.

In spite of what others have said to the contrary, many of our birds sing very sweetly, though there is never the rich flow of notes that the European songsters have. Many of these in South Africa begin the songs of the birds of the dear home-country, and then break off, as if they had forgotten the rest, or

as if the memories of the place where they had learned the songs were too much for them.

There is a sort of clanship amongst our African birds. When a snake attacks a nest or the birds discover an owl, they immediately give a peculiar cry, at which other birds come to the rescue. They whirl round the tree in which the snake or owl is ensconced, and fly up and down, buffeting the enemy, apparently with the hopes of driving it away.

The Dutch have a story to explain the cause of these commotions on the discovery of an owl: In days gone by, when birds and beasts held their parliaments and sports like human beings, there arose a great discussion amongst the birds as to which could fly the highest. The crane put in a claim for high flying, also the padderfanger, and the owl too; but of course he was laughed at, for he was far too sleepy to do anything of the sort. The eagle also put in a claim, and had many supporters. But as opinion was much divided, they agreed to have a great meeting on a certain day to see who could fly the highest. All sorts of

birds entered for the competition, from the little Knedike to the powerful eagle-hawk. The sports began, and each bird did his best. The smallest birds competed first and then the larger ones. When the tinkey-tinkey's turn came, he was nowhere to be found, and the other birds laughed, thinking that he was frightened, and had run away, for he had never flown further than from one bush to another. However, they went on with the sports, and the birds circled up into the air one after the other. When the eagle-hawk's turn came, he easily rose higher than any of But, unnoticed by any, the little them. tinkey-tinkey had hidden himself on the great eagle-hawk's back, and just as the eaglehawk lifted its wings to swoop down to earth again, the tinkey-tinkey flew out to the tip of one of the uplifted wings, crying, "I flew the highest, I flew the highest." The ostrich tried to fly after that, being the biggest bird, but was of course quite a failure.

Now the birds were very angry with the tinkey-tinkey for playing them such a trick, and decided that he should be well punished.

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But when they went to look for him, they found that he had gone down a small hole into an ant-hill, and none of the other birds could get him out. So they determined to set a watch at the hole to catch him as he came out. The owl having big eyes and looking the wisest of all birds, was chosen to watch the hole. But the owl found it slow work, and soon began to blink his eyes, and then went to sleep. So the tinkey-tinkey came out and flew away.

Presently the other birds came back to see if the tinkey-tinkey had been caught. Finding the owl asleep, they buffeted him. This has now, say the Dutch, become a custom amongst the smaller birds, who, when they see an owl, always remind him of his stupidity by flying in his face and teasing him.

Our house is a wood-and-iron one, with black and white gable ends. It is thoroughly English, having been built in the old country. A verandah (which is a necessity in this sunny country) runs round three sides of the house. We make good use of our stoep, sitting there in the heat of the day, reading and enjoying what cool breezes there may be, and the view across the river to the mountains beyond. On our verandah we receive our visitors and give them afternoon tea. It is also the place where we keep our choicest flowers and plants: coleus in many colours, begonias, maidenhair ferns, chrysanthemums, geraniums, and many other treasures.

It would be hard to say which hour of the day we most enjoy on the verandah, perhaps the evenings, when the greatest heat of the day is over, and the shadows begin to lengthen out, when the birds begin their evening song, and the mountains take a russet purple hue, and varying tints play in the sky. As the sun sinks, the mountains seem to close around us, and one star after another will appear, the Southern Cross and its two pointers brighter than all. Perhaps the moon will rise over the edge of the hills, flooding the country with a soft light, the lesser stars become obliterated, and only a few of the largest constellations can be seen.

One of the grandest of Nature's pictures that I ever saw, was this same view just at

sunset. We had had a fearful thunder-storm, and the bush and trees were heavy with rain. The birds came out from their leafy shelters to sing their evening carol, and the air was fresh and sweet. The rain had ceased where we were, but the east, which the house faces, was purple and grey with thick clouds from which rain was still falling. Behind us, the sun was setting below an archway of molten gold. Across the valley, in front of us, was a large and perfect triple rainbow; within the arch a curtain of dropping gold, caused by the sunlight catching the raindrops; outside the arch were deep purple and grev clouds. On the left a hill was crowned by the brilliant, though broken, arch of another rainbow, while a third spanned a kloof amongst the hills on the right.

Our verandah is in fact our favourite resort, and we are proud of it—I think with good reason.

Near the house are single white, also sweetscented double-pink oleanders. The single white is especially pretty and delicate, but it has no scent, and soon spoils with the high winds. Close by, too, is a hedge of heliotrope, pink, yellow, and vermilion in colour. It bears masses of flowers, and has a very sweet scent, which attracts thousands of butterflies. It would be impossible to try to describe the gaudy colours of their wings. When disturbed, they rise in a rainbow-coloured cloud of brightest hue.

We have the small watch-dog already mentioned. He lives near the house in a kennel which the natives call his house. When he performs what tricks we have taught him, for the natives' edification, they often nearly roll over with laughter. day he attracted our attention by furious and continued barking, and being loosed from his chain, at once attacked a cobra, which, unnoticed by us, had been gliding along the wall of the house. The dog bit it several times, but did not seem to injure it, for before I could get a stick with which to kill the reptile, it had slipped into the lining of the house, through a gap left in the iron during some repairs. A cobra is not a nice neighbour, and after very carefully closing up all cracks and holes on the inside of the wall, we did our best to entice it with milk and other delicacies to come out again. But all to no purpose. It would only put out its head and then retire. At last, in desperation, we closed the hole up, and left it to its fate. Besides cobras, which often reach six feet or more in length, we have found of poisonous snakes, numbers of puff-adders and night-adders, also a few garter-snakes (which are showily marked with red, yellow and dark brown); and we have killed hundreds of ground-snakes and water-snakes, which are said to be non-We have now practically exterpoisonous. minated every kind of snake from our grounds, which were at first infested by them.

The winter months are from May to September. The nights are then cold, and ice of a quarter-inch in thickness is common. The leaves fall from the trees and the flowers wither, making our garden look as if it were in mourning for the warm sunny weather that has departed. These four months are almost rainless, but this is usually compensated for by heavy mists which the frost some-

times turns into a rime that makes the bush look as white as if covered with snow.

In September we hope for rain, and if our hopes are realised, the garden springs into life, as if some magic wand had been waved over it, covering it with a sea of tender green, and billows of pink and white blossom. Many truant birds come back to us, and everything seems at one step to have passed from a dormant state to one of life and energy.

The hottest part of the year is at Christmas, when the thermometer often passes 100° in the house. At this season of the year very hot winds blow, which dry up the plants that are not well watered, so that the leaves crumble like burnt paper, if crushed in the hand.

On Christmas Day, which is often the hottest in the year, we sit in the sweltering heat dividing our time between doing what is necessary and trying to find some place that is a little less hot than another. We try without success to keep cool by imagining old friends and scenes in England—outside, the frost

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and snow; inside, the familiar fireside and rooms decked with holly and mistletoe, the cheerful faces round the bright fire, the—— but the very mention of a bright fire makes us feel hot, and we change the subject.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIVERS

ONE of our chief reasons for coming to Alale was the fine lagoons in the river beds.

Like all other rivers in South Africa, the Ban and Neyr rivers contain no constantly running water. But there are numerous "holes of water," or lagoons, which are divided from each other by "drifts," that is by roads or tracks, or they are separated by hard bed-rock or heaps of loose and rounded stones. The banks are lined almost always with a hedge of willows and other trees, and edged with rushes, reeds, and cyperus, a rush with a green star-shaped top and flower.

The lagoon on which we depend for water is some five feet deep, and extends for nearly a mile up the Ban river. It also continues some half mile along the Neyr river, which

is a tributary of the Ban river. The bottom is muddy clay.

One great disadvantage to nearly all Cape Colony rivers is that the water is not clear, being strongly coloured with fine red Karroo soil, which never seems to settle.

For some years we have suffered from severe droughts, and once or twice the water has been almost completely dried up. When the lagoon is low like this, the natives go a-fishing. Forming themselves into line across some slightly deeper part of the river-bed, and arming themselves with long and slender willow boughs, they walk towards shallower water, driving the fish before them with their sticks. When the fish are driven into the shallows, thousands of them jump out of the water, numbers being killed or stunned by the beaters' sticks. Small native boys pounce upon these fish and throw them upon the bank, where they are picked up and packed into sacks and baskets. The whole makes a very lively scene, with the shouting natives, splashing water, and shining fish being thrown to the packers on the banks.

The long droughts are usually followed by very heavy rains, which soon turn the stagnant pools and dry river-bed into a roaring torrent, carrying large tree-trunks and the accumulated refuse of months before it.

The Ban river does not rise as fast as some others in the Colony, having a smaller area of drainage. But I have seen it rise about two feet in an hour, after only two hours' heavy rain.

The floods always bring down large quantities of soil from the higher country, where devastation is seen in the ruined acres of land which have been swept by the heavy rains. This mud is deposited in the valleys in thick layers, and forms rich garden soil. After a flood, the vegetation along the riverside remains encrusted with red mud for some time, giving everything below the high-water mark a very kharki-like appearance.

Once, when the river "came down," the water was so thickly impregnated with mud, that thousands of fish lined the banks, gasping for air. They were so close together that

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with a garden rake and pitchfork we were able to get a bucketful of very fine fish in a short time.

The Ban river is more accessible to the township than the Neyr river, and natives are constantly to be seen coming down the banks with tins to draw water, or fishers sitting patiently with line in hand, waiting for the fish which seldom seem to come to them, though they catch numbers of fat and slimy river frogs.

The Ban river is wider and more open than the Neyr river. Man has been at work on its banks, and, as usual, has not improved on Nature. One bank is already almost denuded of trees, and those left have been cut to pieces for firewood and hut-building. But the opposite bank is comparatively untouched, and the whole is still very pretty. Many trees on its banks are weighed down with masses of creepers, chiefly the passion - flower, whose golden-yellow fruits are much sought after by the youth of Alale.

The Ban river is fairly wide up to its junction with the Neyr river, where it forms a triangular piece of water. From this point it narrows, but for nearly a mile is quite wide enough for boating.

With such a lagoon it was not long before we bought a boat to put upon it. This has been a constant pleasure to us. The village children, too, are never tired of rowing up the river in it. Sometimes it will be a string of little girls, each with a pet monkey in her arms, tied with a piece of cord round the waist for safety, the other end of it being secured round the "mother's" waist. The airs these monkeys put on, and the distress they cause their "mothers" by their antics, is comical in the extreme. These monkeys are a small grey variety, with bare faces and large eyes; the hair stands round the face like a frill. It is wonderful what they can be taught to do, but they can never be really trusted.

All boys like boating, and these Colonial laddies are no exception; they are peculiarly sharp in detecting life, whether fish, birds, or nests, which makes a row with them very interesting.

Sometimes the children will sing as we row along, when the natives come down the river bank to see what is going on, and cattle and ostriches peer at us cautiously from behind the bushes.

The rivers are beautiful at all hours, either by day or night, and the boat is in constant requisition, either in the fresh sunny mornings, when everything seems to begin the day with new hopes, or in the panting heat of mid-day, when even the birds are silent and seek the deepest shade to protect them from the fierceness of the sun.

Once or twice at night we have strung Chinese lanterns from one end of the boat to the other, and decorated the garden and trees in the same way, and then rowed up the river to the sound of song and laughter, with the coloured lights dancing in our wake; again, at other times, with the full moon as our only lamp, and no other sound than the dipping oars, or the hoo-hoo-ing of the owls, accompanied by the rustle of the night wind among the trees.

The Neyr river is our favourite river, being shaded with full-grown trees, and too far away from the village to be spoilt by its inhabitants.

After a hard morning's work, with hot winds

and a broiling sun, it is delightful to get into our boat and row up the stream, where the trees meet overhead and give refreshing shade-The greenery and still water is a rest to mind and body. At such times it is a pleasure, after a few strong strokes, to ship our oars and glide under the leafy archway, with the willow branches brushing the boat as it passes through some narrower part. Thus quietly gliding along, we can observe the birds and other creatures in these seldom disturbed parts: king-fishers with red crests and bright plumage flit from bough to bough as the boat advances, while the legavons,* too lazy to rise, lie prone on the mud banks, where they have been basking in a stray patch of sunlight. Strings of bubbles rise to the surface of the water and float before the gentle breeze, marking the lurking-place of a frog, eel, or crab; or a fish will rise for some dainty morsel and fall with a splash into the water again, leaving a circle of rings to spread in ever-widening ripples. Sometimes a crane will suddenly rise from a near tree and fly ahead some hundred yards,

^{*} The Nile Monitor.

to settle and then rise again as the boat approaches.

In one part of this river the finks have built. From each pendant willow branch hangs a fink's nest, woven from long grasses into the shape of a snail's shell, the fink entering from below and laying its eggs in the rounded hollow which in the snail-shell holds the body of the By this means the eggs are kept safe snail. from snakes and wet. When the wind blows, and the nest swings at the end of the slender branch, the eggs are safe and cannot be thrown There are few prettier sights than some hundreds of these nests together, swaying gently in the light breeze, especially in the late nesting season, when some birds are still building, and others have finished, the finks flitting here and there with grass and food.

In some parts the river widens into still pools, in others it narrows until the trees meet across the water, or prostrate trunks almost block it altogether.

After a row of about half a mile the boat's progress is stayed by a barrier of loose stones and bed-rock, overgrown with a thick mat of

rushes. Leaving the boat, we may push on through mimosa bushes, rushes, and mud, the latter bearing the tracks of baboons and bok, which have been to the river to drink. There is quite a high bank of hard sandy soil and stones on one side, which has been carved out by the river and washed by the rains into sharp ridges, and what look like miniature castles and bridges.

Water-turtles do not often visit our part of the river, but I have seen a pair disporting themselves just opposite our garden. back of one would rise slowly above the water, then suddenly sink with a swirl, when its companion would rise and go through the same process. The legavon, which is amphibious, deserves special notice, for it is the most distinctively African animal that we have. In shape it very much resembles a lizard, and often reaches seven feet and more in length. Its tongue is forked, and the small scales which cover the entire body are dusky grey and yellow. Legavons are great enemies to our fowls, carrying off young chickens and eggs. We have skins of two specimens which were

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caught inside our fowl-pens, they not being able to find the way out again. When attacked by dogs, they use their tails in fighting; their teeth are not strong enough to do any serious damage to the tough skin of the dog.

In the Neyr river the scene is always changing and shifting; colour, light, and shade, never seem the same twice over. There is life always and everywhere, and yet with it a strange peacefulness; birds flying and singing amongst the trees, innumerable insects, gliding snakes, and legavons.

CHAPTER V

A HOLIDAY TRIP

THE only means of exit from our township is by three rugged roads or by the railway.

Railway travelling in South Africa is, even under the best circumstances, an experience which one does not readily wish to repeat oftener than is necessary. So, when contemplating a day's holiday, we make our arrangements so as to depend on the railway as little as possible. Bullock waggons are the usual substitute chosen. These have long open bodies roughly planked at the bottom. A tent is usually rigged over the after part as a screen for the women and children, who are also accommodated with mattresses and cushions to reduce the severe joltings caused by the waggons passing over rough parts of the road;

as the waggons have no springs, these vibrations are considerable.

Bullock waggons are drawn by teams of oxen yoked together in couples, often twelve The last two oxen are span, or even more. yoked to the disselboom, to which is attached a long chain, or rope of hemp, or plaited thongs of raw hide; to this the other yokes are attached. The two front oxen are under the care of a "leader," who is usually picturesquely attired in airy clothing, and crowned with a nondescript hat. It is the leader's duty to haul his two oxen out of the way of passing vehicles, big boulders, or other obstructions. The leader also assists when the waggon is to be brought to a standstill, which they begin to do some hundred yards before reaching their stopping-place, and accomplish with a great deal of shouting and most blood-curdling yells. The driver's favourite seat is on the disselboom, or the front part of the waggon, from which he can keep an eye on his oxen and encourage them with his gigantic whip—which cracks like rifle shots over their heads, and never misses its mark.

Great preparations are necessary as, whatever place may be chosen for the holiday, no assistance can be expected in the way of provisions when the destination is reached. Water must be taken, besides cooking-pots, cups, plates, knives, food, and even firewood. As a consequence, picnics are few and far between, and when they do occur, as many as possible take advantage of them for a holiday.

A day having been chosen, and all preparations completed, the start is made on some moonlight night, for the double purpose of getting as long a holiday as possible, and also that the oxen may get part of their work done whilst it is cool.

Climbing into the waggons, we make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances will allow, amongst buckets, barrels, and baskets, with cautions not to sit on the butter or the jam-pots. All are at last settled down, and the baggage stowed away. To the cracking of whips and yelling of drivers and onlookers, the oxen are induced to start, and we begin our journey.

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Such occasions are red-letter days, and every one comes out to see us off. Our musical friends get up an improvised band, consisting of concertinas, tin-whistles, and paraffin tins for drums, and play us out of the town.

At last we have left the township behind, and are bumping along in the dark, over rocky roads and through rough river-drifts. The drivers urge on their cattle with whip and voice, while the parties in the different waggons amuse themselves in various ways: some trying to go to sleep, others singing all sorts of songs, which now and then change to cries, as some thorny branch stretching across the waggons sweeps every one to the bottom amongst miscellaneous articles of food.

And so we jolt along through gorges and along steep mountain slopes, sometimes through thick bush, which often almost meets overhead, to our great discomfort. The wild country round is lit up by the moon, which brings the white rocks and treetrunks out from their darker surroundings with ghostly distinctness.

About midnight the camping ground chosen for spending the rest of the night is reached, the waggons are drawn up on an old clearing and the oxen outspanned.

The men of the party light a fire and build it up high with dried bush. The iron pot is brought out, filled with water and set on the fire. When the water is boiling, coffee is made and served out. We then settle ourselves in our warmest cloaks and rugs round the fire and prepare for rest. But when a large party are out for a holiday, sleep is more easily thought of than accomplished. One of our native drivers considered himself a wit, and, having such a good audience upon which to practise it, gave his humour full play. He was neither witty nor brilliant, but we laughed heartily all the same; the truth was, that we were willing to laugh at anything in that clear air, with the dancing fire in our midst and the stars overhead. But presently the wit himself was exhausted, and getting a large potato bag, he withdrew into it, head and all, and went to sleep. there was no sound to be heard but contented

grunting and snoring. Now and then the fire settles down, throwing up a few sparks into the clear air, the only other sound being the sweet and clear notes of the nachtuile, besides which there is not even a whisper of wind to stir the leaves, or the sound of a single insect.

Soon the night wears away. The moon sinks, and a faint line of light shows in the east, which lengthens and spreads across the sky, bringing the birds out of their nests to shake the night's creases from their wings, and clear their throats to welcome the sun. Our trippers, too, wake up, and all eyes are turned to the east. As a blazing segment of the sun shows over the hills, we all exclaim "There he is!" and set to work making the fire up for breakfast before starting again.

While we breakfast, the drivers hunt up and inspan the oxen, and very soon we are again on our way. How different everything looks by daylight! We can now enjoy the flowers and green bush, which spreads around us as far as we can see, and the birds too, flitting about singly or in flocks.

We have now reached the top of a hill, and near by is a farm, round which are acres of land, cleared of bush, ploughed and sown with various crops, which already show green above the red soil. The dam of water, surrounded by oak trees covered with vivid green, is a sight which refreshes us after the desolations through which we have been passing.

Now we go down into a hollow, the waggon often skidding with the steepness of the descent. At the bottom are clumps of Kaffir plum-trees, surrounded by luxuriant bush, which tells of water in the neighbourhood. Then we enter a narrow kloof. the rocky walls of which rise rugged and high on either side of us; flaming aloes with their soft, green-coloured leaves, and hardy bushes, clinging to every ledge and cleft where they can find enough earth to sustain them. The bumping promised from the roughness of the road through the kloof is not tempting, so we get down and walk. Leaving the road, we scramble along the bed of a rivulet of clear cool water, whose banks are lined with

arum lilies, and shaded by beautiful trees, bushes, and creepers. Leaving the cool shade at the other end of the kloof, we come out again into the scorching sunshine, and for the first time realizing how hot it really is, are only too glad to scramble into the waggons again.

Passing one or two more farms, surrounded by cultivated land, we again get into wild but more open country, covered with smaller bush and carpeted with flowers, of which some are very bright and beautiful. Here the secretary birds seem plentiful, and are often pointed out as they fly to the top of some prominent bush, holding their snaky prey in their claws.

In places where the country is almost bare of bush, it is covered with ant-heaps, which look like innumerable warts, varying in colour with the soil; they often stand three feet above the ground, and are exceedingly hard and impervious. It is wonderful how such small insects can build up these domes of solid soil, every mouthful of which has been worked into mortar before being placed in position. If

we break a hole in one of these "hills," we find it honeycombed with galleries, out of which swarm thousands of the inhabitants. who at once set to work repairing the breach. Many ant-hills may be seen neatly repaired in places where they have been broken, the soil usually varying slightly in colour, but exactly joining the edges of the old fracture. some places we see ant-heaps which have been torn open by the powerful claws of an ant-bear, or by the side of the road the hollowed-out and blackened remains of an ant-hill marks the place where some wayfarer has cooked his meal, using the nest as his fire-place. The natives often use them as ovens, by scraping out the interior, and after heating it with a fire they draw out the ashes and replace them with their dough.

Arrived at our destination, the oxen are again outspanned, and the party divides up into companies, who, after careful enquiries about dinner, betake themselves to various occupations. One party will penetrate some secluded kloof in search of orchids, maidenhair ferns, and other treasures—some will lie on

their backs in the shade of the bushes or waggons to talk and read, while those with a superfluous amount of energy play cricket and football—the more responsible members of the party busying themselves with preparations for the coming meal.

All too quickly the day wears away, and the lengthening shadows warn us that it is time to pack up and get home again. Every one is healthily tired, and when the oxen have been inspanned and everything is ready, we are glad to stretch ourselves out in the bottom of the waggons amongst the ruins of pies and other provisions, empty casks and baskets, in the hope of getting rest.

When nearing home we shake ourselves together, knowing that every one who can manage to do so will be on the look-out for our return, and no returning hero likes to appear sleepy and good-for-nothing when facing an admiring crowd. So we sing our best and briskest, pretending that it is not hard work to keep our eyes open.

The most extraordinary thing is how the

native drivers and leaders, who have been walking most of the way and have been always busy, are able to keep awake and at their work. Our "wit" was the liveliest member of our party when we got back again, being apparently quite uninfluenced by the journey and heat.

Arrived at home again, the expectant crowd receives us with noisy cheers and greetings, and our holiday is over, only another pleasant memory added to the record of our lives.

CHAPTER VI

NATIVES

NATIVES are certainly an important part of colonial everyday life. They are the labourers of the Colony—and the despair of every city and township throughout the country.

The tribes are so mixed that many do not know to which they belong. Hottentots, Kaffirs, Fingos, Basutos—all seem to be an almost inseparable mass, caused by intermarriage and the necessities of labour. This fusing of native races must in time consolidate those in South Africa into one people with the same interests and troubles. They will then be a far greater and more trouble-some problem to deal with than now.

On certain questions the natives are as sharply divided as are people at home. They have certain pride of race amongst themselves, the Kaffirs and Fingos looking down upon Hottentots and Basutos, and vice versa.

When living in their native kraals, they had the open bush around them, and could keep clean and healthy, but when gathered together in large communities for the convenience of work, it is almost impossible to keep them either clean or healthy. The consequence of this uncleanliness is that fever and disease of various kinds run riot amongst them, and this insanitary condition of the natives endangers the lives of the white people amongst whom they live.

Many lives and thousands of pounds would be saved, if it were possible to make it compulsory by law that no new township might be formed unless ample provision were made for a native location, divided into erven of a fixed area, upon each of which not more than one family might live. These locations always become a necessity as each township begins to grow and native labourers congregate. It usually reaches a crisis in the life of every township not already provided with a location, just at the very time when all monies available are most needed for town improvements, and when the inhabitants are least prepared to meet a native difficulty of the kind. A further provision seems needed to protect white land-holders in any township from the danger incurred by grasping neighbours, who buy the land and rent it to native tenants, of whom often two or even three families will reside on one erf, by which means the owner of the property reaps a rich profit, to the detriment of his neighbour's property and health. Why should not all town natives be compelled to live in locations? and, if necessary, there should be other locations for Asiatics.

In our township the native huts form an interesting study, nearly every tribe following its own peculiar style of architecture.

The Kaffir huts are round in shape, and carefully built of upright posts, with small boughs woven in and out between them, the whole neatly plastered inside and out with mud and thatched with rushes. The door is often made of closely-woven wicker-work, and the floor of ants' nests (where these are

A NATIVE HUT.

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procurable), pounded and levelled while moist.

In cold or wet weather a fire will be made in the centre of the hut, the smoke finding its way to the upper air through the thatch and cracks of the door. At all other times the fire is made out of doors in some particularly sheltered spot, bearing the signs of many former fires. Knives, bunches of leaves (used for flavouring, smoking, or medicine), and other treasures are thrust into the thatch for safety. The beds take up little room in the daytime, being merely mats, which are rolled up when not in use,

Other huts are a strong contrast to the well-built dwellings of the Kaffirs. Anything is good enough for the natives who build them, and any trouble too much. These habitations are not worth calling huts, being formed merely of a few boughs stuck into the ground and bent at the top, over which old sacks and rags are thrown to keep the wet out. The whole structure is hardly long enough to lie down in at full length.

The natives' home centre is their fire of wood,

with the well-blackened three-legged pot over the red embers. Here they gather when work is done, and smoke, sing, and talk, often far into Comparatively, very few natives have what we might term a hobby. a little gardening in their spare time, but the water difficulty here is too great for much success or encouragement, so most of the huts stand in the midst of bare patches of ground. Most natives are fond of singing, and usually have fine voices, which are worth listening to, especially when blended in chorus. Some, too, seem to have a gift for music. A few are clever carvers of pipes and sticks, such as are seen in every curio shop in South Africa, figured by means of red-hot irons into intricate designs of animals, fish, and birds. One man used to bring to our house for sale clay models of natives, horses, and baboons. These articles were hardened by baking, and were finished off with black and white pigments. The figures were armed with spears, the shafts of which were made of some stiff fibre and the blades of clay; shields and clubs were made of the same materials. Other natives are expert at

capturing wild animals. The skins of these animals they dress, and then make them into various useful articles, such as wallets and bags. Some of the latter are made by sewing up the whole skin, including the legs and tail. When finished, the legs stand out straight and the tail forms a convenient handle. Nearly all true native skin-work is sewn with gut taken from the animal.

In our township very few of the natives wear the red blanket so often seen in other town locations. The greater part of our male coloured population are dressed in cast-off European clothing, mended with numerous patches of every variety of colour and shape. They usually add a coloured handkerchief tied round the head under a cap, and bead necklaces, including, if possible, jackals' teeth, which are valued as a charm. All natives are proverbially fond of coloured beads. I saw one man with a chain of beads round his neck like a Lord Mayor's in grandeur, to the end of which was suspended a purse, also laboriously edged in patterns of coloured beads. They are also fond of bracelets of twisted wire, plaited grass, or other material, which are conveniently adapted to the purpose. The most curious bracelet I ever saw was made from the skin of a large sea-turtle's foot and leg, cut into two parts and bent so that the claws met in the front.

The women often wear heavy bracelets of brass or copper, which sometimes extend from the wrist and half way up the arm, and necklaces of glass beads, or beads roughly cut out from medicinal roots, and valued as specifics for various ills.

Toilet cannot be indulged in by a native belle as it can by a white one. The native belles are at the disadvantage of only having a mop of close curls, which cannot be improved upon, beyond the tying of a ribbon round the head in Grecian fashion. If they want to look very grand, they tie a gorgeous silk handkerchief over their heads and under the chin, and clothe themselves in bright-coloured dresses. If they really want to "do-the-thing," they add to their other finery a pair of shoes and stockings and an umbrella! The shoes are often a size or two too small, but are worn (as

long as any one is there to see) with a heroism worthy of a better cause; both shoes and stockings are, however, only for show, and are carried in the hand when no one is near to admire them.

Some of the men are dandies, and know how to put on airs as well as any of the white variety. These black dandies will sometimes appear in spotless black clothes and highly polished boots, a flower in the button-hole, light cane with silver handle, delicately tilted under the arm at the correct angle, a startling crimson tie, white stand-up collar and shirt front, and a white straw hat fastened to the coat by a hat guard. Such an apparition makes one realise that conceit is, after all, a cheap luxury, which can be indulged in with an equal amount of satisfaction by an almost penniless clown as by the noblest fop in the country.

I believe that I am justified in saying that most natives prefer being married according to Christian rites—if only for the sake of the ceremony. They revel in any kind of pageant. But Christians or not, the Kaffirs almost

always pay the parents in kind for their wives, usually cattle. About four years ago a man gave five cattle for his wife, the cattle were valued at five pounds each-not a bad price for a native to pay! That was before the rinderpest. Directly after the rinderpest, which swept most of the cattle from the country, thefts of what stock remained became common. Many of these thefts were believed to be traceable to young fellows who wanted to marry, but whose intended fathersin-law, with keen business instincts, were not willing to part with their daughters for anything less than cattle.

Wives are a good investment from a native point of view. Besides doing all the household work, which often includes such items as crushing mealies for the family, which is done by placing the "whole" mealies in the hollowed-out butt-end of a tree-trunk, and then pounding them with a large double-ended wooden pestle, they often add to the family purse by washing or charing for their white neighbours. When on a journey too, you will see the wives and women-folk laden to

their full capacity with household goods, and probably a small child supported by a shawl upon her back, while the men walk along beside them, carrying nothing but one or two sticks.

A few years ago I witnessed a native wedding. The bridegroom came from a farm in the country, but the bride was a town woman. They were married in one of the native churches. The bride was dressed in white, and had a veil, black boots, and an umbrella. The bridegroom had on a black suit, bright tie, bowler hat, and new boots. There were three little girls as bridesmaids dressed in pink frocks, white stockings, and black boots. Each also had a pink umbrella. By the side of each bridesmaid was a full-grown native man clothed in his Sunday best suit.

When the ceremony in the church was over, the party went to the house of the bride's father, where a feast had been prepared, for which the father, as is the custom, had provided an ox, not a fat one, and there were loud complaints about the toughness of the meat in consequence. The feast was followed by a dance or parade. The women formed themselves into line, and began to clap their hands in time to a monotonous song which rose and fell in volume. In front of them the wedding party marched solemnly up and A smartly-dressed native conducted the proceedings, walking or rather dancing backwards, using a furled umbrella as a sort of baton. The bride and bridegroom came next, and were followed by the small bridesmaids, each with her gigantic caretaker, and all the umbrellas were spread out in full and dazzling display, without doubt causing bitter envy to many of the onlookers. This dancing, feasting, and singing continued all night, and it was long after the sun had risen when the happy pair took their departure in a bullock waggon.

When about to take a long and hot journey by road or rail, the natives often rub over that part of their bodies, which would be exposed to the sun, a kind of pot clay, either yellow or red in colour, having moistened the clay before applying it to the skin. A party bedaubed like this, and squatting in a ring on their haunches, waiting for a train, their miscellaneous possessions scattered around them, make a picture which is both ghastly and grotesque.

No native starts on a journey without providing himself with one or more long plain sticks, which he uses either to walk with or upon which he hangs his special treasures. When needful, these long sticks are handy weapons to fight with. Two natives may often be seen going through all the actions, movements, and shouts of actual warfare with them by way of play and practice. When the natives arrive at the larger towns, the police usually disarm them of these long sticks, as they are considered dangerous, and are often freely used in drunken brawls.

At work, raw natives do not get on well singly, but have to be set on their job in couples or companies, a monotonous song keeping rhythm to their motions. It is interesting to watch a gang of coloured labourers, say digging on the railway. Few seem satisfied to go quietly to work as an

English workman would, but dig to sundry ejaculations, turning their spade around in the air, looking brave and sometimes dancing.

Native labourers, with all other Government employés on the Cape Railways, are paid once a month. Pay-day is a busy day for the store-keepers, and an anxious one for the wives of the coloured men, many of whom manage to get fairly drunk before their wives can find them. But when these coloured amazons do find their drunken spouses, they bundle them home without ceremony, to the accompaniment of a shrill jargon.

Drink is one of the curses of South Africa, as it is of all the countries of the world. The natives cannot be expected to possess the restraint which is natural to every even-minded European, and the only way to cure native drunkenness is to altogether do away with the canteens and the supply of liquor to them. But this is not likely to be done, where there is so much vested interest concerned, and perhaps a certain amount of conscience on the part of those whites who, having very liberal facilities for drinking

themselves, would say, if asked to sign a paper for stopping the supply of liquor to the natives: "Poor beggars, let them have their drink for all I care!"—and the next day very probably would dismiss one of their own coloured hands for being drunk. Immorality amongst a certain class of natives is proverbial, perhaps it may be called excusable, seeing that to them it does not seem immoral, for they were never taught otherwise. Where incalculable harm is done, is when whites encourage them That this is a fact is in their evil practices. painfully evident beyond all possibility of denial in any gathering of native children on a township like ours. I believe that things are not so bad as they have been. May God grant that the change for the better may be maintained and improved.

Every one who believes in teaching the doctrines of Christianity to the natives, I think, agrees that it will be best done by the means of properly instructed native teachers. But far more are needed. It is a pity that those already there do not pull together, instead of wrangling with each other under the names

of different sects! I know that many oppose the teaching of Christianity to natives altogether, one reason being that (as they say) "It is the thin end of the wedge. Pastors are leaders of the people, and this religious movement is the beginning of a native power, which will end in bloodshed, for the natives look up to their leaders, and there are sure to be revolutionary pastors." Another reason often given for not teaching them Christianity is, that it makes them "useless as labourers, for they learn to look on whites as merely their equals, and consequently put on airs and won't work." Christians who use these arguments show a very poor belief in Christianity, whose fruits are given in Gal. v. 22-24. As to the pastors becoming revolutionary leaders of the coloured peoples, leaders they will have, and must have, of some kind, and it is better that they should be men who are instructed in the peaceful doctrines of Christianity, than mere savages with nothing better than what is called "civilization," to raise them above their savagery. My own experience with professing Christian natives has been in every way satisfactory. They have been honest and straightforward, steady and industrious. Treat your native servants like human beings, pay them well as native labourers, show them that you appreciate good work, be firm but kind, and they will serve you faithfully, and will not be apt to run away from you as soon as they have learnt something, which those servants do who have unjust masters.

In education, many seem to think that a native is not fitted for daily life under the present circumstances, unless he has a high college education! This idea is about as right as it would be to try and improve a few children and young people from the London slums, by giving them a high college education, with the hope of making the slum districts more fit for present-day life by so doing. What the natives do want is a good grounding in the three R's to make them a useful people, and encouragement and help in such occupations as gardening, to make them a home-loving people.

It is only fair to quote from an extract

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showing very clearly the other side of the question:—

"They (the natives) feel their ignorance; they see that it daily exposes them to deception and outrage from better-instructed neighbours; very few can read the laws that are passed for their benefit or learn from the newspapers how their interests are being dealt with by those in authority. Hence their very natural desire for the education of their children, not elementary only, but of the highest grade possible to which they may be able to attain."

CHAPTER VII

CAPE RAILWAYS

THE Cape Government railways are divided into three systems: The Western—from Cape Town to the North; The Midland—from Port Elizabeth to the North by Graaf Reinet or Cradock; and the Eastern system from East London to the North.

The three systems are connected by a bridle railway running from De Aar to Stormberg Junction.

Trains running for any great distance are made up (with the exception of the third class) of coaches of the corridor pattern, each being fitted with a lavatory and space for baggage.

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Every compartment has sleeping accommodation for four persons, for whom berths are provided, which fold into the wall of the carriage when not in use, and each compartment can be shut off from the rest of the coach by sliding doors which can be fastened on the inside with a catch. The first-class compartments have also folding tables. A conductor travels with these trains, whose duty is to attend to the comfort of the passengers, and make their beds at night—and receive tips!

All passenger luggage is weighed, numbered, and registered, before being placed in the train, the owner receiving a ticket for it, which must be given up at his destination before he can claim his baggage. There are no dining-cars, but the Government have built refreshment rooms at different points on the line. These are run by contractors, some of whom provide excellent meals, handsomely served. In other cases the meals are anything but attractive. One redeeming feature is that there is always ample time to eat one's food, for the Cape Government railways never

seem to be in a hurry; on sections of the line they travel at not more than twelve miles an hour, including stoppages. This, no doubt, is partly accounted for by the steep gradients, bad coal, and worse water, all of which tax the ingenuity of the engineers.

The water difficulty is so great that any place along the route of the railways, where a reasonable quantity of water is found, has become an important centre, round which flourishing railway "camps" have risen, with workshops, coaling and engine-sheds, and rows of trim cottages, each surrounded by a neat garden. These are the homes of guards, drivers, firemen, and other railway employés. These little oases are a very pleasant surprise to the traveller after a long dusty journey over parched and uninteresting country. have been told that in at least one of these camps, they had to blast holes in the rock, and fill them with earth, before they could plant any trees.

The Cape Railway Company provides three classes of carriages for the accommodation of travellers. No white man would think of

travelling third class, if he could possibly afford to pay the second-class fare. The third class is almost entirely devoted to native passenger traffic, company which to a white man does not prove agreeable. For one thing, they all, both male and female, smoke incessantly, using long - bowled pipes, from which rise an assortment of perfumes which are not of Araby. A native's person has also anything but a pleasant odour, which is natural to them, but does not agree with the taste of any white man. In the second-class compartments you are nearly sure to have the company of some hardy, dried-up Dutch farmers, who are always willing to be sociable and liberal, possibly offering you a quince or other delicacy, as wooden and knotty as themselves, though their intention is evidently of the best. It is a mystery how many of these Dutch farmers exist at all. They are easily satisfied, and if they make enough to keep them alive, do not seem to care about working for anything more. They, as a people, do not improve the condition of the country very much, for their farms, which are

usually extensive, are often absolutely barren, and quite innocent of any cultivation. We can hardly blame them for being unwilling to sell any part of their possessions to more enterprising outsiders, though it is no doubt very exasperating for the outsiders to see valuable land uncultivated, and not to be able to get hold of it!

An English doctor told me some of his experiences when working amongst the Dutch. He gave one Dutchman a lotion for some complaint, and not long afterwards the man returned for some more medicine. He congratulated the doctor on the very good quality of the lotion, and said that it was grand medicine, the strongest any doctor had ever given him: it had actually burst the bottle!

Another Dutchman came to the same doctor, complaining that he had a weak chest. The sympathetic doctor prepared to sound him, for which purpose the man opened his coat and shirt and removed six layers of flannel, which he said he had worn for some months. The doctor told him it was not

surprising if he had a weak chest; he must only wear one flannel, and wash his chest in cold water each day. This was too much for the Dutchman, who, for a moment or two, could only stand aghast. When he did find his voice, he indignantly told the doctor that he used always to wash himself all over each New Year's Day, but that was now a long time ago—he could not exactly say how long!

I do not wish to imply that this is characteristic of all the Cape Dutch. Many whom I know are real gentlemen, whose daily life puts many English Colonials to shame. None can properly sympathise with the rugged nature of the Cape Dutch but those who have roughed it themselves in the Colonies; these can judge them by their own experiences of the lowering influence which the constant loneliness and contact with wild nature has.

One feature of the Cape Government railways is the cottages of the surfacemen. For loneliness, the life of these surfacemen and their families must be almost unique, isolated as they are from other society, their nearest neighbour being often the next surfaceman five miles away. On every side stretch miles of barren and uninhabited country.

The cottages of these men are comfortable, and are built of stone; they are nearly all surrounded by a garden patch and a few trees. For supplies, these men and their families depend on the Railway Company, and, in times of drought, even for their water.

Many Europeans, who cannot get work, go on tramp along the railways, which are extensively used as a highway by all sorts of pedestrians. An interesting account of a tramp's experiences along the Cape railways appeared in the Cape Times some time ago. Unfortunately, a large number of railway tramps are not so refined as the one mentioned in the Cape Times, and make a livelihood by begging at the railway cottages, whose occupants dare not refuse to supply them, especially when the surfaceman is busy on the line, leaving his wife and children alone in the cottage.

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The Western system of railways, running from Cape Town, is the dreariest of any of the trunk lines. After the first hundred miles or a little more, the coast country is left behind, and the railway mounts sharply to the great Karroo, across which it runs for hundreds of miles. The Karroo is said to be covered with green vegetation after heavy rains, but I have never been fortunate enough to see it anything else than a bare, barren, sand-covered waste, with mountains in the distance to relieve it from absolute and painful monotony. True, when the begins to set, the mountains deck themselves in rich, glowing, russet reds and purples, which makes up for many evils.

One of the grandest bits of scenery on the Cape Colony railways is between Stormberg Junction and Queenstown, on the Eastern system. Shortly after leaving Stormberg Junction the line runs along the top of a ridge, from which the valley can be seen in which Queenstown lies. It seems impossible, unless we walk or fly, to reach the valley far down below us, from which rise grand masses

of rock, divided from each other by precipitous kloofs. These piles of rock look like gigantic buttresses, placed there to keep the higher lands from sliding down upon the green country over which they frown. The line is laid in and out amongst these rocky masses, and eventually, after skirting a small valley, reaches the low land which had been seen from above. Between Queenstown and East London there are bits of country covered with rolling green hills, dotted with well-grown bush, which almost reminds one of some well-kept English park.

The Midland system passes through some pretty bits and some wild scenery. Passenger trains are so few and far between that it sometimes saves a good deal of time to travel by goods train; which any one is allowed to do, but they first have to sign a document, stating that they will not hold the Railway Company responsible if they get killed or injured! There is a neat little bit of sarcasm in the signing of this "death warrant," as I have heard it called. Travelling by "goods" is not luxurious, though it certainly is an

interesting experience, and the privilege a useful and necessary one.

In the Colony, railway travelling for pleasure is not, I think, much indulged in, except in the neighbourhood of the larger towns. With the exception of a few places, which might be almost counted on the fingers, there is no place to go to for pleasure. Travelling is too slow; the sun is too hot; and the dust and dirt too irritating. No! it is those who are new to the country, business men and commercials, who do most of the travelling.

Commercials! They might be called Railway Princes, from the calm, easy way in which they cover their thousands of miles, and the evident anxiety of railway officials to please them. I was once travelling with a friend, and we were congratulating ourselves in having secured a first-class compartment to ourselves, when just before the train started, a white-turbaned hotel-porter appeared at the door, with a quantity of luggage hung about his person; this he packed into the racks, and went for some

more, stacked that up, and fetched some more. Then the owner appeared, muffled up in yards of comforter. It was evident that he was a commercial traveller. He took out a handkerchief, saturated with eucalyptus oil, and sneezed as he took his seat opposite mine, then sneezed again, after which he gave us the information that he had "cod a gold." I soon found an excuse, and moved to the other end of the carriage, as if wishing to speak to my friend, and sat back in the corner to enjoy the scenery. Presently we passed a farm, to which I wished to draw my friend's attention, and leaned forward for the purpose. When, horrors! I discovered that my coat was glued to the back of the seat! With a little gentle pulling I detached myself, and then found that some sticky substance, of the consistency of thick honey, had been trickling out of one of the parcels upon the back of my coat and the back of the seat. The commercial sneezed, blew his nose, and sneezed again, then smiling blandly, informed me, in the mildest of tones, that it was "a dew baded breserving bixture, gomposed bostly of

Then he sneezed suggar." again. relapsed into silence. But my coat was spoilt, and I was not inclined to take the matter so easily, so, while getting the worst of the mess off with a knife, I told him what I thought of his carelessness, in not seeing that such parcels were packed away properly. replied that it was "dearly all suggar, ad would bost ligely cob off wid hod wader;" he was "buch bore sorry dad I good bossably be," and, smiling benignly, settled down again and was silent. Having done my best with the knife, I put my coat on again, and leaned back in a fresh seat, to be immediately glued there with the sticky stuff remaining on my coat.

I had hardly settled myself down, when one of the commercial's hand-bags fell from the rack and knocked my hat off. I think I have an average amount of patience, but this was too much for it, and I rated the cause of the trouble roundly for his carelessness and indifference. But the only effect was that this bland commercial, with a look which was the picture of injured innocence, after violently

sneezing and blowing his nose, declared that he had already said "he was berry sorry, wad bore could I exbect, did I wand him to buy a dew suid?" and suiting the action to the word, he thrust his hand deep into his trouser pocket and brought out—nothing, by way of showing his sincerity. Then he lapsed into silence again. The last I saw of him, he had the carriage to himself, and was leaning out of the window, sneezing and smiling. Whenever I enter a railway carriage now, I usually look, with a shiver of apprehension, at the rack above me!

Another class of people that we meet with on these South-African railways, is one that is numerous in most parts of the world—people who never seem to stop eating or drinking. They come into a clean railway compartment, in which you have comfortably settled yourself, laden with suspicious-looking baskets, out of the corners of which the tops of rebellious bottles stick out, and the odd tags of paper. Or they come loaded with parcels and paperbags, broken into holes in various places, from which crumbs and squashed fruit stream out

over the tables and upon the seats and floor. You could track these people all over the station by their droppings, as the hounds track the hares in a paper chase. But with even these people there is a limit, and having spilt food enough to feed a small family, they catch at stray remains, and carelessly throw them out of the window, and of course half of them fly back into your face, if you happen to be sitting in the opposite corner. Or they thoughtlessly throw empty bottles and other missiles from the train, without troubling to look first to see if there is any one in the way. I was once travelling in a first-class carriage, into which two young ladies got, whose whole luggage consisted of packets of eatables and some sort of pop in black bottles, and whose whole occupation seemed to be to eat, gossip, giggle, and generally enjoy themselves. soon as they were in the car and had arranged their bottles in the racks, they fell to work on their parcels. They giggled, gossiped and ate. and ate, giggled, and gossiped the whole way. Presently the pop in the bottle got worked up with the heat and shaking, the corks blew out,

and the dirty stuff squirted all over the carriage. How these girls did enjoy the fun! The giggling grew quite uproarious—Bah!

CHAPTER VIII

FEVER AND HOLIDAY

To live in South Africa without getting a fever of some kind would hardly be the correct thing! Very many new-comers take it soon after they get to work. They either drink tainted water, or bathe in it, and the thing is done. They have taken the poison into their system, and, not being acclimatised, are very soon stretched on their backs in the clutches of typhoid. Then comes a spell of tossing fever and a wandering brain, with pictures of all that is most horrible, or most beautiful, to the imagination. Then there is the awakening to a sense of extreme weakness. and a return of the memory to things which happened before the fever took its full grip. The weary wait after the temperature has reached its normal figure, the anxiety lest it

may go bounding up again before the testing time is over, and with it all, that sickening and unchanging diet of milk. All being well, the patient then goes through the various stages of slops and soft foods, and so on to fully recovered health. True, he is still weak, but he has had his dose of fever, and congratulates himself that typhoid is seldom recurrent. He may be very grateful if he comes out of it without some permanent mark, by which he will always be reminded of the fee he has paid to one of Africa's grim toll keepers.

The hospitals of Cape Colony nearly always have a few cases of fever; often they are full of them. The hospitals are, as far as I have seen them, provided with excellent and devoted doctors and nurses. Natives and Europeans receive the same treatment, but in different wards. I think that most of the nurses prefer nursing black babies to white ones, and many doctors confess to the same weakness! Even if the sufferer from sickness or accident is unable to get to the hospital, he is sure to find willing, simple-hearted and

practical help and sympathy from his neighbours. These Colonials take the business of helping others when in trouble as a matter of course.

When the disease has run its course, and the patient begins to gain strength, he naturally looks out for a suitable place in which to recruit his health.

A holiday, after two months or more on one's back in a raging fever, is more enjoyable than at any other time. The air seems fresher, the birds sing more sweetly, and the rolling mountains seem to stretch further away into distance than ever before, and to be touched with more beautiful tones and colouring. The lingering weakness restrains the convalescent from scouring miles of country as he used to do; he is more content with short walks and long rests, during which he sees more wonderful and beautiful things than he ever dreamed of in his former hurried walks and climbs.

It was after a long spell of typhoid that my wife, a friend, and myself went for such a holiday. We chose for our residence L--- Hotel, situated by itself on a hill, and surrounded by plantations of fir-trees and eucalyptus. The hotel was a rambling old place, which had been used by its former owners as a private summer residence for a few months in each year. Many additions had been made to the building at various times, with the usual result in such cases of long passages and rooms in corners where one least expected to find them. There were separate verandahs on three sides of the house, some overgrown with shady creepers, and others shadowed by stately rows of pines and eucalyptus, so that at all times of the day it was possible to find a shady spot.

To sit in the shade of a row of sombre eucalyptus-trees, and look out on a sunny scene of hill and valley, framed in by the tall and graceful tree-trunks, tinted with grey and grey-red, is a very enjoyable occupation when you feel good for nothing else.

We lodged in a half-ruined cottage belonging to the hotel. To reach it, we had to pass through the hotel gardens, which were well timbered with beautiful trees, and planted with

rose-bushes so thickly covered with blossoms that they looked like bouquets of flowers—white and red. Our landlord was justly very proud of his garden.

We occupied the only two habitable rooms in the cottage, one having a large open fire-place, round which we spent many pleasant evenings. Both rooms had a door opening upon a sunny verandah, which we had to ourselves. Other doors opened into the ruined interior of the cottage.

The first night we spent in our new quarters was an exciting one, suggestive of ghosts who objected to intruders. We had gone to bed, and were dreaming such peaceful dreams as one will dream when perfectly satisfied with one's surroundings, when a loud crash in the next room, which was separated from our own by a glazed door, woke us up with a start, and set our hearts What was it? thumping. Listen! the house falling in? No! Snakes? (and our blood began to freeze all down our backs), No-Listen! Shuffle, shuffle, tramp, tramp-What can it be?-Natives? We each wanted to go and see, but each thought it would be bad for the other's health to get out of bed in the cold, so we lay still and listened.

Then came an energetic clattering and rolling of tins and bottles over the floors of empty rooms and passages, then some more shuffling, smashing of glass, creaking floorboards, and more clattering. The noise lasted all night, and we had little sleep, for as soon as we began to doze, there would be a violent renewal of the noise, which would wake us up again with a start. An exploration of the ruined part of the house next morning partly unravelled the mystery for us. We had tea and biscuits in the afternoon, and when we had finished, we put the tray, containing a basin of sugar amongst other things, into an empty and disused room behind our own. Our exploration revealed the tray and its contents distributed over the floor; everything that was edible had disappeared. There was an empty tin and a bottle, and some broken glass in other rooms and passages, which had evidently played an important part in the entertainment of the night before.

We also found that two outside doors had no locks and would not shut, and that many panes of glass were missing from doors and windows: so it was evident that some natives or dogs had been having a good time during the night, enjoying alternate refreshments and impromptu skittles. After that we took good care not to provide entertainment for any more nocturnal visitors, and we were left undisturbed during the rest of our stay.

L—— Hotel is situated in one of the few places in Cape Colony that I know of which might be called naturally pretty and almost grand at the same time. It is built on a ridge about 2000 feet above the sea. This ridge runs parallel with the coast, and rises abruptly from the lower coast-land. At either end rise higher hills, which stand out from the ridge like the watch-towers of a castle. Inland, the ridge falls sharply away to a valley which terminates in the K——river. Beyond this valley the hills rise, ridge behind ridge, until lost in distance in a dreamy blue mist.

The face of both hills and ridge are seamed

with deep kloofs and valleys which are carpeted with wild vegetation of bush and trees, and the deeper and moister gullies with maiden-hair and other ferns.

Just below our cottage one of these valleys opened out, down at the bottom of which was a dry stream-bed, choked with arum lilies, and on each side grew shrubs and flowers, including the beautiful African heather, pink and white in colour, which is much larger than English heather, and has a fuller and more delicate flower.

A walk of a few hundred yards brought us to the south edge of the ridge, from which we could see the steely-blue Indian Ocean, thirty miles away. And between us and it lay the low coast country. The ridge rises so sharply from these lowlands that we see them almost as if we were looking down from a balloon. The country is spread out below us in rolling hills and flat table-lands, with deep kloofs and a few zigzagging roads curving round hills or lost sight of for a time in deep valleys. Here and there were small white farm-buildings, with patches of cultivated land, as sharply

cut off from the surrounding bush as the squares on a chess-board, the largest of them looking ridiculously small amidst the vast extent of untouched bush country by which they are surrounded. As a whole, the low country looks in the glare of the sun flat, desolate and uninviting, but it gives an idea of unlimited space. Towards evening the lights and shades of hill and valley are intensified, and the deep kloofs become dark sinuous lines, and the shadows stretching out from the mountains clothe the nakedness of the country, which then fades away towards the ocean into a light blue haze.

Our holiday took place during the English-Dutch war, with the progress of which we anxiously kept in touch, even on our hill-top. As fellow-guests we had a family of Johannes-burg refugees, including boys, who went daily into the neighbouring town to college. Each evening they would return laden with newspaper "specials," which those who had not been to town immediately pounced upon, in the hope of learning that the war was coming to the long-delayed close. The "specials"

were mostly disappointing. Ten "specials" a day were not uncommon, but nine out of the ten contained nothing but stale news. owners of newspapers must have reaped a rich harvest from them. It seemed only necessary to put any sort of news upon a slip of paper (it did not apparently matter to the public how old it was), then engage a number of "special boys," with loud voices and long legs, to scour the town. No one refused to buy a "special" when it was offered, so that the boys had often sold their copies before they had gone a hundred yards. difference of five minutes between the rival newspaper offices in the issue of a "special" must have made all the difference between a success or otherwise.

Our fellow-guests, as company, were rather a failure, for they were largely composed of inoffensive old ladies, so there were not many social evenings in the chilly public rooms, and we spent most of our evenings by our own roaring fireside. We did rise to the occasion once, and gave a musical evening in honour of a young widower, a farmer, who had come

to welcome his intended bride, who also was staying at the hotel. The young lady herself played and sung to the evident rapture of the young farmer. She needed to be merry while she could be, for she was only about twentyone years old, looked very delicate, and was soon going to marry the widower with five children and an adopted child. She was a Roman Catholic by persuasion, he was a Wesleyan, and from their conversation we gathered that neither sympathized with the other in religious matters. She would have a farm-house to look after, which she was evidently quite willing to try and do, for she was most persistent in her enquiries as to how to make coffee and tea! She had been brought up in a convent, though her people were Protestants, and was there taught needlework, painting, and music, which seemed to us a poor substitute for the muscle and practical knowledge she would need in her farm life. It is an unanswerable mystery why so many people choose to send their children to the convent schools of Cape Colony. The Roman Church has influence enough already out there,

without the added power being given them, which the education and upbringing of the children of Protestant parents puts into their hands.

CHAPTER IX

ODDS AND ENDS

Ours is a village divided against itself. It came into existence with the railway, of which for some time it formed the terminus. In those days, strings of bullock waggons and mail-carts left and arrived at this point from places in the interior.

When the plans for our township were first drawn up, it was divided into village and railway camp.

The railway property is governed from headquarters or Cape Town, and the village is practically controlled (?) from the same quarter, for its inhabitants, outside railway employés. (of whom, with the exception of four white families and a handful of natives, it is composed) are not strong enough, either financially or in voting power, to do much independently.

Railway employés are, as a body, of little

use to any township. They do not know for how long they will be able to live in one place, and so take little interest in its progress, nor are they likely to spend money on improvements, which they might never enjoy. For the same reasons, our particular village has no governing body with powers to manage the affairs of the township, which are consequently left to manage themselves, with disastrous results to the death-rate.

It is true that the Government appointed a Board of Health for camp and village. After a year of existence nothing had been done beyond drawing up a reasonable set of rules, which the Government neither accepted nor rejected. At the time of writing, not one member of that Board exists. One member died, two left the township, one retired from ill-health, and the remaining member retired because he felt lonely. After a year's work and letter-writing, the village was in the same state as it was to begin with, and the death-rate as high as ever.

A new Board has been appointed, who hope for better things and a more useful existence.

The inhabitants of the towns and villages along the railways are very much like the members of one big family. Any one travelling by the Cape railways must have noticed how the stations en route are often crowded with the inhabitants of the camp or village surrounding it, and how every one seems to know every one else, exchanging friendly greetings, learning the latest news, and gossiping about their own family affairs. A good time to study this family feeling is on such occasions as New Year's night. The up and down trains used to cross each other in our township just at midnight. On New Year's night it was a sight worth seeing. When the trains arrived, every one fraternised with every one else, shaking hands like old friends, drinking toasts, and roaring out songs of loyalty and friendship. Their singing was accompanied by the clanging of every variety of bell in the camp, and the squealing of the whistles of every engine in the sheds, which was able to get up steam enough for the purpose.

It is surprising how many people you get to know after spending a year or two in a camp. Wherever one goes about the country afterwards, one is nearly sure to meet with somebody he knew before.

This big Cape "family" is not so large, but that the individual members are often very jealous of each other, yet it is large enough for certain members to look with disdain upon their less pushing brethren. There are also in the Cape "family" rich relations who override their "poor relations" without much mercy, or without allowing them much liberty. I have often wondered that these poor relations did not protest and claim equal rights and freedom with those amongst whom they lived.

Amongst the more numerous class of people in Cape Colony—the working class—there is in private life and affairs a spirit of charity, but even that is doled out by cliques who are very clannish: that is, the railway people stick to themselves, the townspeople do the same, the farmers too, and it is the same between Dutch and English, and so ad infinitum, with the usual exceptions which prove the rule. From my own experience, it appears almost

impossible for all classes of people to pull together for the general welfare, and, looking ahead, it seems to me that it will be a very long time before they do so.

Even the smallest village has nearly always four prominent buildings besides the usual railway buildings. They are: the school, which in many cases is under railway management, and is attended by Dutch and English children, some of whom have to travel many miles by rail to school each day; the church, which in the smaller camps and villages is often only opened once or twice a month for service; the hotel, with its often none too comfortable bedroom accommodation, and its crowded bars and canteens; and the general stores, where anything can be procured, from bread, milk, groceries, and hardware, to lace and patent medicines.

It is a marvel how the supply of the hundred-and-one different lines of odds and ends sold in a general store can be kept up in saleable quantities, but it is managed by the huge mercantile businesses, whose enormous

buildings are well worth exploring. A general storekeeper's trials are almost innumerable. Perhaps the greatest of them is the intense heat which melts his butter and candles, and turns his meat bad in a few hours. Dust storms, too, cause unending trouble. The dust is so fine, and the wind so strong, that it finds its way everywhere, soiling and spoiling almost everything it settles upon. Amongst other enemies are armies of ants, weevils, bees, and flies.

These storekeepers have also to lay themselves out to meet the needs of all sorts of customers, English, Dutch, and natives, each class with endless requirements. I was told of one man who kept three separate price-lists for his English, Dutch, and native customers. He charged the two last classes a great deal more than his English customers, and said it was necessary, because of the large loss sustained in dealing with Dutch and natives, owing to bad debts.

With the exception of one or two items, the goods found in these stores are what one would buy anywhere in England. A good

many American goods are noticeable. In most of these Colonial stores "bush" tea can be bought. It costs sixpence a pound, looks like the clippings of a privet hedge, including the twigs, and is said to be a tonic. Barrels of red or yellow earth will, too, be found in some stores, which the natives use to colour their blankets and persons with. Crushed mealies or samp is also kept in stock, and is largely used by the natives for food, and, when boiled, it forms an important item in their diet.

It is an interesting sight when visiting one of these stores just after the monthly Government pay-train has arrived, to watch the very motley crowd who gather there to spend part of their newly-acquired wealth on luxuries, such as tins of sardines (of which they are very fond, and which they will eat in the shop), or to pay their back debts.

Our township was little disturbed by the howls of war, which swept along our northern borders and through the two doomed states, as English fought the Boers for mastery and Boers fought the English for liberty.

With the rest of South Africa, we felt a painful throb of anxiety before and just after the Boers issued their "Ultimatum." thought quite probable that the Dutch in the district would rise, and there were many anxious consultations as to what should be done if the township was attacked. Rumours. too, reached us of buried arms, fortified laagers and insults to English people in the neighbourhood. One of the Dutch nachtmaals fell about the same time, and was largely attended by strangers as well as by local Dutch. was believed that these nachtmaals were used by the Dutch in many places to stir up their bad feelings against the English. The result in this district did not justify the suppositions held against the Dutch. They remained as a body loyal and quiet.

Our only real personal excitement happened on a certain night, just when anxiety was at its height. Some especially . alarming rumours had been floated the day

before, and we went to bed in fear and trembling, prepared for anything before the sun rose again.

We were trying to sleep peacefully, and had partially succeeded, when we awakened by the furious barking of dogs and general clamour. This was shortly followed by the firing of a gun and weird squeals, which evidently came from some person or animal in pain. We thought that it must be the beginning of the end, and were quite prepared to receive anybody who might come. But no one did come. Enquiries next morning revealed the fact that some half-wild native dogs had been serenading our neighbour, and then began to fight each other. As our neighbour was unable to sleep through the noise, he had turned his gun on the intruders, with fatal results!

Our township lay on one of the main arteries to the North, and all day and all night train-loads of soldiers (stowed into open trucks, in fact, into anything that could be made use of) steamed North, at intervals with train-loads of horses and munitions of war; while the trains coming South were laden with refugees, first from one district, then from another, as the Boers advanced. These refugees brought the most extraordinary stories with them of what was going on in the North, for which they vouched the truth, but which nearly always turned out to be false. Though we did not believe half of what we were told, we gathered all the same in groups around those refugees, who were willing to give any information. The refugees were of all colours and classes. Men, women, and children were mixed up almost without distinction, travelling like the soldiers in any kind of conveyance which could be used for the purpose.

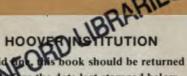
It was not until the line of khaki had inserted itself along the northern borders of the Colony, that people began to breathe more freely. We then said to each other that the Dutch had lost their one chance of doing untold damage to Cape Colony.

Our township went "Mafeking mad" like the rest of the English world. Why for Mafeking especially, is not clear at first sight, for there were other deeds of equal prowess during the war. The relief of Mafeking had been promised, expected, and reported so often and for such a long time, that sentiment and expectation were fanned to a white heat, and when the relief did come, the bottled-up spirits of the people escaped with a loud report. I was in my house when the official news was posted at the Telegraph Office, but it was quite unnecessary to go there to find As soon as it became known that it out. the official information had come to hand. village and camp became centres of pandemonium. Engine whistles shrieked, everyone shouted, the natives caught the excitement, and beat wildly on empty paraffin tins, and every bell in the place joined in the din. Going to the station to share in the rejoicings, we passed the school-house, where two or three youngsters were ringing the bell in a way that it had never been rung before. others were on the roof yelling—we could see those on the school-house yelling, and the bell swaying furiously, but could not hear a sound from either, as it was completely drowned by the noise around.

THE END.

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